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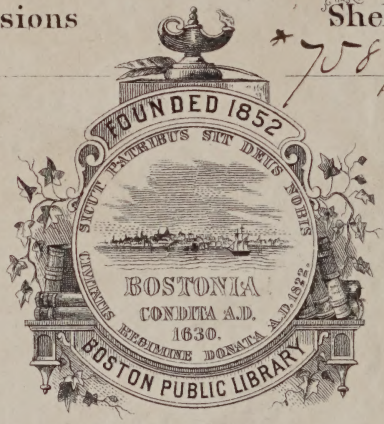

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TRACTS FOR THINKING MEN AND WOMEN.

NO. 1.—PRICE 5 CENTS.

The Sin of Slavery, the Guilt of the Church,

AND THE

DUTY OF THE MINISTRY.

An Address delivered before the Abolition Society at New York, on Anniversary Week, 1858.

By REV. GEORGE B. CHEEVER, D.D.

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ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT: We are driven this day to God. Apart from His Word, and His grace to make His Word effectual, and to keep it even in the hearts of His children from perversion, there is no hope in the heart of any political party, nor any Christian party, for the poor slave. We have seen that men of piety, age, grey hairs, experience, eloquence, can plead the very authority of the Word of God for concealing and denying that Word; can call upon Christ to bear witness that their first Christian duty is to take down His light from the candlestick and to put it under a bushel; can deliberately in the name of God so pervert the salt of Christian truth as to make it nothing but an additional corrupting element on the dunghill of the world's corruptions. We have seen an eloquent Bishop, with silver locks, pleading for silence on the sin of slavery, and justifying the Executive Committee of the Tract Society, as possessing an indestructible negative against the instructions of their constituents, and in opposition to the will and Word of God, by virtue of being the managers of a great circumlocution office, the perfection of whose sagacity and strength is in the art, *How not to do it.* We cannot but remember the answer of God: "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin;" and the judgment of the Lord Jesus: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me."

We have also seen venerable and Christian men not shrinking to denounce the declaration that American slavery is a sin, as *ultra* and inexpedient, and exposing the cause of righteous-

ness to defeat and ruin. Paul rejoiced, in his day, that he had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. The professed followers of Paul in our day do not shun to rebuke such declaration as fanatical and rash. Before such developments, were it not that our trust is in God and not man, we should have no more any strength, or life, or courage left in us. There is no hope, apart from God's Word, and from the full and faithful application of it. There is wanting the element of conscientious, stubborn, heartfelt, eternal hostility against slavery as sin, as reprobated and forbidden of God in the same catalogue with lying, perjury, murder, whoremongering, piracy, man-stealing, and guilt, that, by the law not of God only, but man, is worthy of death. Where shall such an element be found? How shall it be created, quickened, trained? Not in the school of political self-seeking and expediency; not under obedience to fugitive slave laws; not under proclamations and assertions of allegiance to Dred Scott decisions; not in the school of unrighteous and oppressive statutes; not under the law of silence on the Word of God — silence in the pulpit — silence in the Tract House; but under the law of fire and thunder in the manifestation of the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God — by revealing the wrath of God from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, and against this stupendous iniquity as foremost and most germinating in enormity and malignity, most sweeping and accumulating in the habits and materials of sin and misery, the elements and securities of national ruin. Our only hope is in the revived, living, faithful religion of a free, out-spoken, consistent church, and a fearless, unmuzzled, faithful ministry. Our only hope is in a conscience fastened to the Word of God, and a heart flaming with its sacred fire; a popular church and ministry, holding forth the word of life, and giving themselves up to its supremacy, in such an unrestricted abandonment of all things to its sovereignty (not the popular sovereignty, but God's sovereignty), that it may have free course and be glorified.

The intensity of the plague with us, the exasperation and strength of the iniquity and the evil, are in the provisions for its perpetuity, and the insurances of its increase. Not content with enduring it ourselves, for one generation, we have by law entailed it upon others; and the generations to come, as God distributes the consequences, must inevitably rise up and call each preceding generation accursed. If this sin had a possible death, like that of intemperance in the grave of the present drunkard, and were not propagated by a legal fatalism forbidding it to die out, or to be renounced, or the will to be broken —a legal fatalism and missionary zeal united, providing future victims for it in the fastest ratio of increase in human population — then would the evil be comparatively trifling, and the sin would speedily come to an end. But there is no such limit, no such natural consumption or wearing out, no such release by death; the evil and the sin are carefully secured *against* death, and injected, as the heart's blood, into the veins of the next generation, and any attempt to stop the process throws the whole system into convulsions.

We practice the iniquity upon children, innocent children, the natives of our own land, unbought, unsold, unpaid for, without consultation or consent of father or mother, or the shadow of a permission from the Almighty; and they, the new-born babes of this system, are the compound interest year by year added to the sin and its capital, which thus doubles upon us in the next generation, and must treble in another. We make use of the most sacred domestic affections, of maternal, filial, and, I was going to say, connubial love — but the system forbids, and I have to say *contubernal* — for such rapid and accumulating production of the iniquity, as shall be in some measure adequate to the demand. The whole family relation, the whole domestic state, is prostituted, poisoned, turned into a misery-making machine for the agent of all evil. What God meant should be the source and inspiration of happiness, becomes the fountain of sin and woe. The sacred names of husband, wife,

father, mother, son, daughter, babe, become the exponents of various forces and values in the slave-breeding institute. And the whole perfection, completeness, and concentration of this creative power in this manufacturing interest, descends like a trip-hammer on the children, beating them from the birth into marketable articles, and stamping and sealing them as chattels, foredoomed and fatalized to run till they wear out, as living spindles, wheels, activities of labor and productiveness, in the same horrible system.

And each generation of immortal marketable stuff is as exactly fashioned in these grooves, moulds, channels, wefted, netted, and drawn through, to come out the invariable product, as the yards of carpeting are cut from the loom to be trodden on, or as the coins drop from the die for the circulation of society. This is the peculiarity of the sin of slavery in the foremost Christian country on the face of the earth. In this branch of native industry and manufacture we are self-reliant. Disavowing a protective policy in almost everything else, we are proudly patriotic for the security, superiority and abundance of this most sacred native product of domestic manufacture, and for neither the raw material nor the bleaching of it will depend on any other country in the world.

This is the manner, these are the principles, on which we obey the precepts and fulfil the glories of the 72d Psalm. Instead of obeying God in delivering the children of the needy from deceit and violence, we foredoom them to all the oppression endured by their fathers; instead of judging the poor with righteousness and the children of the oppressed with equity, we deliberately and solemnly give them over to oppression, as incapable of brotherhood and citizenship, and having no rights that white men are bound to respect. Instead of removing every yoke, we predestinate them *for* the yoke, and perpetuate the yoke for *them*, as a fixture prepared from the birth — the controlling, governing, supreme domestic law — the guiding institution and policy of the house, the State, the nation.

By thus laying our grasp on an unborn race; by saying beforehand to immortal beings, the work of the Creator, you cannot come into God's world but as infant slaves, articles of property and merchandise, but with a curse of our national justice and equity branding you for the slave-pen, and separating you from the manhood of all mankind; by this robbery from God and man we become a nation of men-stealers — a community of baptized Thugs for the kidnapping of the children of four millions of people, and the assassination of their personality.

If this were done now, for the first time, to a nation by themselves; if we made a descent upon Africa, China, India, or elsewhere, and carried off into hopeless slavery the children of four millions, the universe would utter a roar of terror and indignation at such a crime. But organize it into a system — make this robbery and moral assassination a fixture of law and policy from generation to generation, and set up its support as the watchword of a powerful political party, the test of faithfulness and patriotism, and the security of an unlimited command of the whole patronage of the United States Government, and forthwith the sanction and sustaining of it become the shining virtue of compromise and expediency, and he is the dangerous man and the madman in the community who undertakes to disturb this arrangement, or to agitate the conscience in regard to it. Forthwith, it is no longer the sin which is regarded with astonishment and horror, but the denunciation of it as sin! It is no longer the perpetrators of such a crime, and its supporters, who are to be the objects of reproach and condemnation, but those who cause the truth to bear against the crime — those who call it by the name with which God has branded it, and visit it with the reprobation that God has laid upon it.

And especially the political world and the Pharisees of political churches stand in horror of the very bad spirit, the unchristian spirit, of those who denounce this wickedness with

the direct application of the word of God. It is a subject which must be excluded from the pulpit, because it is a sin enthroned in state, a political sin, to be treated only by political quacks, with political drenches, platforms, cataplasms and compromises, which the only duty of the Church and the ministry is quietly to indorse and sanction, for the sake of peace.

The system of Slavery is now at length asserted to be the chosen missionary institute of the Lord Almighty. And, admitting it to be such, we are certainly foremost of all the nations in carrying forward the great missionary work. If the appointed work to be done for the children of the needy is that of branding and training them as chattels and brute beasts for the market, we have no rivals in this honor. This is, in fact, the greatest, vastest, most persevering missionary work that we perform. Our instrumentality in binding down in hopeless bondage the children of four millions of immortal beings, guilty of a skin not colored like our own, is our largest instrumentality, thus far, in the glories of the millenium.

By our laws providing that the slave and its increase shall be deemed and doomed our personal chattels forever, we constitute for them a millenium of sin and misery. We convert them into a community, in which it is impossible that the fundamental laws of Christianity should be recognized and obeyed, or the most commonly acknowledged and most sacred institutions of the Christian state be regarded. The laws of God for husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, children, cannot be applied, cannot be obeyed, in such a community. "Husbands, love your wives," is a divine injunction. But for those most miserable outcasts of humanity, the American slaves, there can be no such law, but an admonition against it. God's claims, so expressed, interfere with man's property in man. Husbands, beware of imagining that you have any rights, any authority, in regard to the chattels you are permitted to live with; beware of ever so loving them as to be

unwilling to sacrifice them at a moment's warning to the avarice, the need, or the passions, of your owners. Ye are not permitted to love, but only in subjection to the price of the market, the necessities of your master, and the grand rule of your domestic institution, the slave and its increase.

Wives, be obedient to your husbands. What? Obedience from a chattel to a chattel? Wives ye are none, and this divine law belongs not to you, but for the profit of your masters. Your obedience and your increase belong to them, and to none else.

Children, obey your parents. But slaves have no children, and their children have no parents, except only as the bales of cotton have a parent in the gin and the factory, where they were shaped and bonded for the market. These commands and precepts are all and only for the masters, not the slaves. Slaves have no ties, no affections, no duties, no obligations, no belongings, but for their owners, whose property they are, and for whom and at their bidding every faculty, capacity, emotion, must be devoted, occupied, tasted, improved, sold at the highest premium to the highest bidder whenever, however, and wherever, the owner's interest requires it.

And it is not isolated beings that we devote thus, for a mere lifetime, to such degradation and cruelty, but we create a perpetual, unfailing, and self-renewing spring of this wickedness. It is not a transitory shower of blistering drops that we cause to pass over the land, but an Artesian well that we sink of domestic shame and misery for future generations. In the word of God it is said, referring to the glory and blessedness of the establishment of righteousness and freedom as the fundamental fixtures of society, "If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations." But we, by foredooming unborn children to the yoke, and preparing it for them, are securing a succession of curses and crimes, crimes and curses, as the heritage of the social state. We have no more right to enact by law that the *off-*

spring of slaves shall be slaves, than we have to make a law that the offspring of *the free whites* shall be slaves. If such a law were passed in the State of New York, a law that the children of those engaged in manual labor should from the birth be taken and held as chattels, to be bought and sold as the property of those capitalists for whom their parents have been laboring, could such a law sanction such a crime? Could it make it any other than man-stealing? Could it be pleaded that it is not man-stealing, because it is children-stealing? What is it when these children grow up?

And if they have children, does the fact that their parents were stolen before them give the stealers of the parents any claim upon the next generation? Does the fact that their parents were stolen before them, take away *their* rights as human beings, and turn the stealing of them into a natural and just claim of property? Nothing can transmit the right of theft; no law can sanction it; even if we had a right to steal the parents from themselves, this could give no right to steal the children from the parents and from God. This is the deep damnation of our guilt. The offence cries up to heaven. By stealing children from the birth, we are A NATION OF MEN-STEALERS, and we renew, perpetuate and increase the guilt from generation to generation. We perpetuate the sin and the cruelty upon five times the number that our ancestors did, and insure its being perpetrated by five times more, and then thank God for the success of this providential missionary institution.

The guilt is increasing, but all the while the conscience in regard to it is diminishing and being seared. The sin, by being enlarged in surface and in quantity, seems lessened in intensity. We are more guilty than our fathers in the practice of it, and yet we contrive to make ourselves imagine that we are less guilty and more pious than they. The iniquity is a moral cancer that is eating at the vitals of our piety, while the only treatment we tolerate is increased doses of chloroform, till the

whole system is stupefied under its influence. When a new outrage is committed, we just send to the apothecaries for more laudanum, or swallow, through our representatives, a Lecompton drench and sweat, or suffer Congress to administer an English swindle. Never was a sick and groaning victim more completely at the mercy of unprincipled quacks. Every six months some new experiment of fraud, despotism, bribery, unprincipled and ignorant political surgery, and we are hauled and tossed about, and cut and skinned, as if we were a dead body in the dissecting-room, and Congress nothing but a class of raw, headstrong, roaring medical students, with their knives in their hands, and Dunglison's Anatomy in their pockets. The body does not wince, does not kick, does not even protest; and so they keep cutting and carving, no outrage as yet attempted being so monstrous as to have gone beyond the people's tame endurance.

Our iniquitous and cruel career against the African race came to its climax in the Dred Scott decision; for when iniquity takes the place of national law, and is enthroned in the tribunal of justice, it cannot well go higher; and now that decision, unresisted, uncorrected, is producing its fruits. It is like the star wormwood cast upon all fountains of waters, and men drink and die. Our public officials of justice and of policy, from the highest to the lowest, every time they are about to enact a new violence against the oppressed, only have to refer to the Dred Scott decision, and the basest, meanest, most detestable acts of fraud and cruelty, are converted into righteousness.

From the Secretary of State down through files of marshals, judges, bailiffs, lawyers, to the conductor of the street rail-car, the word passes, and the policy is established, and it is officially announced, and the judicial dictum is reverberated and applauded and applied, that black men have no rights that white men are bound to respect. This dictum is fast being welded into chains, into political precedents sealed and made sure, and

snare after snare in the iron net is woven on by lies, by perversions of the Constitution and of history, by new measures of usurpation unresisted, by presumptuous, unauthorized interpretation of law, till the very breath of the black man is almost beaten out of his body, and he is refused the privilege of expanding his lungs in a Republican atmosphere. Our judges, Cabinet ministers, attorneys-general and local, and Secretaries of State, are hunting up examples of old injustice, for precedents of new villany. They thus set immorality and cruelty in the fountains of justice, infecting all its elements with death, just as vile assassins poison the wells of their neighbors by throwing dead dogs into them, or the carcasses of cats and skunks.

As God declared in a case fearfully similar, they have turned judgment into gall and wormwood, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock. They hunt every man his brother, with a net. That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh, for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire, and so they wrap it up. The best of them is as a brier; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge; they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity; they hatch cockatrice's eggs, and weave the spider's web; he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper. There is no judgment in their goings; they have made them crooked paths, speaking oppression, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood, so that judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off. They are never so happy as when they conceive absolute mischief, the dregs of profound social ignorance, prejudice and depravity, framing mischief by a law which thenceforward they impose as the supreme political and moral state god. They set up the sin of slavery as law, enforce it by the Constitution, under judicial opinions, to which they swear allegiance, and if they cannot discover precedents, they make them.

The Secretary of State dares publicly to affirm that no black man ever received a passport, and cannot, as a citizen, receive one, and shall not. The Dred Scott decision has prepared this lid for the black man's living sepulchre, and Secretary Cass acts the undertaker for the body, and screws down the coffin with an incontrovertible falsehood. Then the Secretary of the Treasury declares that a free negro cannot receive a register for his own vessel, nor be master of his own vessel, nor, as such, have any title to his own property by United States marine papers, for, by the Dred Scott decision, he is no citizen, and can be none, and to be the rightful owner and master of his own maritime property, a man must be a citizen. As he has none of the rights of a citizen, any seafaring man may own *him*, but he cannot himself be the owner of so much as a plank or a nail in his own vessel. Then comes, on the heels of this outrage, the United States Land Commissioner, and from the General Land Office, with the same despotic authority, under the same infernal act, declares that persons of color have no right of purchase and ownership in the public lands, that privilege also being restricted by positive law to citizens of the United States, or those that intend to become such; and by the Dred Scott decision, a man with a colored skin neither is, nor can become, nor can without treason intend to become, a citizen. So, by this decision, and these magisterial interpretations and enforcements of it, the human being with a skin not colored like our own is alienated and expelled from land and sea — is an exile everywhere, and, even on the great highway of nations, no better than a log, or a snag, or a shred of drifting seaweed, over which the keel of a Christian civilization plunges, with all on board grinning approbation of the cruelty. And certainly, if God's word be not thundered against such crimes, the Church and the ministry do, by their silence, set the seal of a Christian approbation on all this. Our revivals of religion become accessory to it, if a fawning, cringing, whining piety, trembling in the fear of man, refuses to bear testimony against such wickedness.

And thus, more and more, the common heart and conscience are hardened against all remorse and repentance in such villany, and each new Administration of the Slave Power becomes the executor of some new and more atrocious scheme of fraud and tyranny, left in trust as a legacy by its predecessor. And men that have kept silent up to the present crisis, have had their capacity of dumbness, their grace of silence, thoroughly tried; they are, indeed, dumb dogs, that no provocation is likely to set to barking. If they have not yet spoken, they will forever hold their peace. What form of this wickedness can be transacted worse than the shapes in which it has already been enthroned and legalized? Would the open revival of the slave trade be any greater atrocity than the decision that a human being, with a colored skin, though born in this country, and free born, and under this government, cannot be a citizen of the United States, and has no rights that white men are bound to respect?

When this iniquity was, by this declaration and decision, publicly inaugurated in the supreme tribunal of national justice; when, in defiance of God's appointment and consecration of the judgment seat for himself, this most astounding cruelty and robbery were proclaimed as the rule of national justice, by which men were let loose for all manner of villany against a whole race of human beings, we imagined that the pulpit would have spoken out, if it never had before, in reprobation of an enormity in a Christian nation so atrocious, so unrivalled. The Sabbath after that prodigious judicial crime, it seemed as if the very Bibles would have burst open of their own accord, and that in living fire the lightning of God's Word would almost have burned its sentence on the walls, and hissed along the congregations. We thought that even men whose lips had been sealed up to that time would have broken that silence forever, and directed the thunders of divine truth against such fearful public enshrinement and enforcement of undissembled, undisputed inhumanity and falsehood. Instead of that, there

was a tame and almost unquestioning acquiescence; and the men that did speak out were themselves denounced as mad accusers and revilers of God's appointed dignities. Instead of denouncing the sin, men, ministers, and editors denounced the denunciation of it as the greatest sin. It had come to pass literally, as in the 59th chapter of Isaiah, that judgment was turned away backward, and justice stood afar off, for truth was fallen in the street, and equity could not enter. Yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey; and the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no judgment.

If ever the Church and the ministry were going to speak out, it should have been then; and if not then, I do not know that any revival of religion, on the same principles, of the same type, will produce utterance. But the calamity to a nation, when the Church and ministry are thus unfaithful to their trust, is not to be computed; nor, on the other hand, is the blessing to a nation possible to be measured, when it has a Church and ministry that it cannot corrupt nor silence. The Church is God's own enshrinement among a people of the living sense of right and wrong, the perception of God's claims, and the sensibility to them; and where that sensibility is vivid among the people, there is always the knowledge of their own rights and the spirit to defend them. But where that sensibility to sin, and to God's claims, dies out, where the Church does not apply God's Word against sin, there both the conscience toward God and the spirit of liberty are debauched and wasted, and the nation ripens for destruction. Even the most fatal oppression, the most vital injuries are not felt, or are submitted to with servile endurance.

Can we go any lower, any deeper, than the Dred Scott decision and its consequences? The disease having, like a run of typhus fever, reached its lowest stage, will there be a reäction of nature toward health? Is there strength enough? At this point, does conscience act under the Word of God? At

this point, is the Word of God being applied? The Divine Spirit is present, as a power of individual salvation, but still, under habitual indifference, there may be a palsy of the conscience in regard to this sin. An individual was met recently by a friend, who asked him how it was with him, and he said he had been busy all winter in the revival, and was at a morning prayer meeting every morning at 6 o'clock. In the course of the conversation, he was asked how he felt in regard to the iniquity going on in Congress. Oh, said he, I don't trouble myself about that at all, and as long as I and my family get enough to eat and to drink, Congress may do what they choose; I have no concern about it. Now, of what possible avail can be whole churches of such Christians, or what effect can tons of such piety have upon the morals of the community, or how will revivals of religion reach the sins of the nation, if piety is content with eating and drinking, and attendance at 6 o'clock morning prayers, while the nation marches steadily to wrath and ruin?

If the Church at large are under such infatuation, then, indeed, the nation is ready to perish; for the Church is the salt of the earth, the conscience of the nation; and if that salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? If the conscience of the Church is corrupted and darkened, the nation has no means of knowing its own evils, and may be far advanced towards irremediable destruction. The conscience of the Church is the only conscience that pretends to be guided by the Word of God, and by that Word a living conscience in the Church and ministry must be the nation's watchman.

One of the darkest and most distressing symptoms in the progress of this iniquity is the insensibility of the popular conscience under outrages that we once supposed, if any approximation to them were perpetrated, were even attempted, would set the nation in a blaze. Even Mr. Webster used to talk of the danger of experiments upon the conscience of the country; but we find no hazard attending them. Outrage

upon outrage is quietly endured, until the people become accustomed to be trampled on, and conscience utters no remonstrance A fearful paralyzing power, a spell of stupefaction, an insensibility unto death, is on the nation: and the Church and the ministry that ought to act as the nation's conscience, are drugged and possessed with the devil of silence; so that the people are not arrested, not alarmed, not made sensible of what Satan's work is being accomplished upon them. This is a fearful treason against God and his Word, a terrible betrayal of principle.

It is as if the nerves of sensation in our system refused to warn us of injury by the sense of pain, so that, as under the power of chloroform, our bodies might be hacked and maimed, and we not aware of it; as in a drunken stupor a man might be fatally burned, and not know it until too late. So, if the Church and the ministry, being God's sentinels to the nation, are bribed or drugged into silence, the nation, by such treachery, will be fatally ruined ere it is aware, and will utterly perish in its own corruption. Yet still we talk of the world's conversion, and here in these anniversaries we drive all the multiform machinery of the Societies we have set in motion, while every day our very power to manage them and to keep them from the villany of our own example grows less, and we go boasting of our health and strength and prosperity, with this terrific disease, under which we may be staggering as a drunken man upon the very last verge of God's endurance.

The indulgence, maintenance, protection and defence of this sin, is the one great obstacle against the missionary influence and work. It cripples us, it manacles our energies, it palsies our efforts. We are in the condition of a man whose whole left side is paralyzed, so that all the strength and life of the right side are occupied and tasked with keeping the palsied half of the body from falling. We are like a man indulging in the use of ardent spirits to a degree just bordering continually on intoxication, so that all the soberness left is but just suffi-

cient to keep him out of the gutter. We are unfit for God's work of overcoming the idolatry of the nations, while we are in slavish subjection to the worship of this Moloch at home. And this is the upshot of all our splendid training, all our vast gifts from God, all our preparations by truth, providence, and grace, for the world's deliverance from sin and Satan! Is it such an agency, or the instrumentality of such a people, that can be relied upon for the world's conversion? Eighteen hundred years Christ crucified has been known and preached on earth, as a righteous Judge and Saviour for the poor and needy, the oppressed, and the children of the needy, and yet, in these last days, and in the nation now vaunted as the foremost Christian nation upon the face of the globe, the iniquity of slavery itself has been revived and maintained as the missionary agency and institution of the Gospel! And all this comes from hiding instead of revealing that divine life which is the light of the world, which is the disclosure and destruction of sin, but being withheld leaves the world in darkness, and the church to be the nursing mother of the world's abominations. As in the absence of the solar light there is nothing but a cellar vegetation, and the nourishing and running wild and free of monsters that shun the light and love the darkness, so in the absence or concealment of God's Word, a sickly, pallid, bloodless sentimentalism of compromise and expediency takes the place of vigorous, virtuous life, and gigantic forms of iniquity breed and thrive. The tremendous despotism of slavery is the result of the policy of silence in the pulpit, silence of the ministry, the delaying and withholding of the Word of God.

Where can such things end, if continued? And if the conscience of the people is not reached and roused, what hope is there that the wickedness of the Government will ever be arrested? They will go just as far as the people will let them — for their conscience is always lower and more insensible than that of the people, but never higher. The conscience of the people is the last defence of Liberty — the last element of

righteous power. If the conscience of the people can be set right, then there is hope in God. If they disavow and throw off this iniquity, God will not lay it to their charge; but if they do not resist it, God will certainly visit it upon them; he will let them be destroyed by it. They have sown the wind — they shall reap the whirlwind.

Here, then, are demonstrated the responsibility and duty of the church and the ministry, as God's appointed instrumentality for training and awakening the conscience of the people. How can national sins be reached in any other way? And how in this way, except only by the Word of God, which is the sole instrument in the hands of the Spirit of God to convince the world of sin? And how is the Word of God to be applied, except by the ministry, sustained by the church for this purpose, and on the Sabbath, when God gathers the people beneath its hearing and its power? The whole salvation of our country — the whole possibility of redemption from the sin of slavery — rests on this question: Will the church and the ministry be faithful? Will the ministry be faithful to God? Will the church uphold and protect the ministry in such faithfulness? The ministry must speak out, and speak with a will, with a purpose, with a perseverance, and continued pressure on the conscience.

The ministry must speak to move the country — not merely to relieve their own consciences, to clear their own skirts by a quiet declaration of opinion, or to enter a protest and then retire. The ministry can move the country, but not by resolutions in Associations or General Assemblies, while the pulpit is as silent as the grave. There is no courage whatever, and there may be very little faithfulness, in framing resolutions which may be but an anodyne to the conscience — a dispensation from ever preaching on the subject. There are no general resolutions in the New Testament to stand in the place of pulpit faithfulness in the application of God's Word; but the rule was always, and everywhere, to renounce the hidden things of

dishonesty, not walking in craftiness nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And again, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the Gospel of God with much contention, and as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

Now, the Word of God is for aggression and conquest, and not a compromise with sin. The Word of God is a park of artillery — a swift-rushing mountain of thunderings and lightnings against sin, to overcome it and get it out of the world, and not a mere protest to save your own credit. The Word of God is to be thundered forth by the ministry for the discomfiture of this great villany and impiety in the judgment seat, and in the legislature, and in the sin of man-stealing; and this can be done in reliance upon God, and at his command, that the nation may be brought to repentance, may cry out, like any other sinners, Men and brethren, what shall we do? and may be redeemed from this mighty iniquity. It is manifest that this requires an attention to it on the part of the church and the ministry, and a space for it in the Sabbath, and a proclamation of God's truth in regard to it, such as never has been given — never has been made. This work is yet to be done, and the power and the glory of the Old Testament, the intense fires of God's love of justice, and his wrath against injustice and oppression, the forked and chain lightnings of the prophets, and the thunderbolts of Hebrew history, are yet to be shot upon this nation's sins. Who dare do it but a ministry commissioned of God, and illuminated and inspired by his Spirit? Who *can* do it but they only? Whose appropriate business is it to do this but theirs, and what is the duty of the church but to support and protect them in doing this? And when and how can they do this, except on the Sabbath — their day, God's day for instructing, reproving, and calling the world to repentance?

It is not a mincing, delicate, light notice of this iniquity that God requires, or the broad, hardened, brazen, unblushing abominations of the Government and the people demand, but a reiterated, reverberating, loud thundering of God's truth. It is very easy to say a soft, apologizing word now and then in regard to it, and excite no anger, no disturbance, and do no good, rouse no man's conscience; and not a few, in what they do say or intimate on such a subject, seem to be begging pardon of the congregation for such a painful allusion, instead of uttering God's voice fearlessly, grandly, and declaring, Thou art the man!

In this matter, Christ's dividing line is true: He that is not for me is against me. If men will not now speak out and act out against slavery, their voice and influence are in favor of it. If the ministers of the Gospel, instead of the policy of silence, had poured out their vials, as God's commissioned angels, and let the thunderings, lightnings and earthquakes shake the heavens and the earth, this iniquity would long since have been arrested. It is only under the repression and forced silence of the Word of God that it has been able to advance with such giant strides, till it has taken possession of the Senatorial, Representative, Executive, and Judicial branches of our Government.

Now, Satan will never cast out Satan, and this iniquity is to be stayed and turned back only by the Word of God, and by the Church and ministry being faithful to that Word. "If they had stood in my counsel," says Jehovah, "and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." Just so now. But this great and mighty result of repentance for sin is not to be got at by silence in regard to the sin; and they who keep silence in a time of temptation and trial do, in fact, defend and daub the sin with untempered mortar. They may say that they are good Anti-Slavery men, as much opposed to this iniquity as any one; but their silence gives consent, and

carries them over into the ranks of the enemy. Their pretensions of Anti-Slavery principles are, indeed, excellent, if the principle itself could be got at for use. They say it is in them *in esse*, as the diamond is in carbon; and so indeed every lump of charcoal, if it could speak, might say, "I am a diamond — do not treat me as if I were merely a piece of charred wood. In potential essence, the diamond is in my nature."

Ah, yes, my good friend, and if you would only tell me how I may bring it out, and keep it in the form of a diamond — how I may catch the essence, and make it stay put — you will make my fortune. But, alas! the world will never see anything in you but charcoal! Your diamond nature does not speak out; your charcoal does.

Just so, there are many in the ministry who will be much offended if you tell them they are not opposed to slavery — therefore, in effect, defend it. They will affirm that, in potential essence, the abhorrence of slavery is in them, though they do not go to the extreme of ever speaking against it.

Aye, and the very difficulty is, that it never makes itself known except by a most potential silence. It is as silent and invisible as the diamond is in the charcoal, or the light in a mass of solid anthracite. On this principle, there is not a dark subterranean coal mine, or bed, or pit, in existence, but what is a region of brilliant, glorious light; but, unfortunately, it needs a great many manipulations of science, a great many torturing processes of art, and operations of fire and water, to extract the material of light, and put it in shining order.

And just so with not a few, who should be lights in the ministry, but are rather like invisible, unsmelted native ores. If they might be subjected to the necessary roastings and smeltings and purifications, and the word of God extracted from them in visible, glorious form and shape, confronting and exposing the gross and damning features of this sin, then indeed it would be a powerful and conquering testimony. But what is principle good for, if not to come forth in action in the time of

trial, if not to withstand temptation, to rebuke iniquity, and protect the weak and down-trodden from the wicked and the strong? What is the worth of silent, inactive, concealed principle, whole acres of it, what better than treachery, or salt that has lost its savor, and is not fit even for a dunghill? What is the worth of a million candles, each hidden under its own bushel? What is the light of the Christian Church and the Christian ministry given for, but to be the light of the world? If it is hidden from the world out of fear, out of a selfish expediency, it is darkness; and how great is that darkness.

It makes us think of the recent discovery that every cubic mile of ocean contains more than two pounds weight of solid silver. How potential! It makes the mouth of a miser water; but he is forced to think, If I could only get at it! Oh, thou mine of incalculable wealth! Two million tons of solid silver in the Atlantic! Ye potential, silvery waves, if I could but evoke, by some concentrated, irresistible chemistry, your hidden riches!

Ay, but there's the rub. 'Tis of no more use to you than the commonest puddle of sea-water; whole leagues of it, nay, the all-surrounding ocean, at your command, of no more value than the smallest secluded nook before your own cottage on the East River. And just so, a whole cubic mile of such Anti-Slavery ministers with sealed lips, or as many as could stand together in the dry bottom of the ocean, would be of no use whatever with their principles of liberty that never speak out — their upright hearts, but silent tongues and pulpits. They are upright as the palm tree, but they speak not; and because of their own policy of silence, they hate him that rebuketh in the gate; they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth, and, in consequence of their silence and conservative influence, the few that do speak out seem extravagant and eccentric, and are marked as madmen or fanatics; they become objects of derision, as noticeable as poor Christian and Faithful were in passing through Vanity Fair — simple, innocent crea-

tures who said, We buy the truth. Truth! Go to the Tract House!

But truth is not only unpopular and inexpedient on such a subject as the sin of Slavery, but exceedingly dangerous. It is not proper to be brought into the pulpit, nor mentioned on the Sabbath — that sacred day of rest, when every irritating and disturbing theme should be kept far aloof from the Sanctuary and from our hearts, for we come to the Church to be comforted, and political preaching is an outrage on our feelings, and a desecration of the day of God; and preaching on the sin of Slavery is political preaching, and if you preach such preaching, it offends the pew-owners, and drives away the people from the church, and prevents them from hiring pews, and diminishes our revenues, so that, if you preach such preaching, the best interests of the Church and society require that we should unsettle you.

Well done, Simon Magus! There you stand; unveil your face, step forth into the light; only avow that you buy your minister, and use him, or lay him on the shelf, just as you would a case of umbrellas or a bale of silk, that you settle him for pew revenues, and that your pulpit is up at auction to the highest bidder for the man who will insure you the greatest sum total of pew rentals, and your power is at an end. The statement of such things is enough to make them a by-word and a hissing. You never can get the people to admit that the final end of God's Word is just simply to keep the finances of a society above water, or as a locomotive to drag them up-hill. God's Word is given for edifying and saving souls, and not merely building temples and paying for them. And the ministers of God's Word, if called to preach in Nineveh and fleeing to Tarshish, will not much longer find the churches to be mere packet ships in which they can snugly sleep out the storm, and pay their passage by concealing their mission.

Concealment is not the law of God's Word, but MANIFESTATION, and in times of danger and of treachery, you are com-

pelled to vary the ordinary law of God's Word, as rains and gentle showers, and to come down in a perfect cataract, as if all the windows of heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up. We may learn something here from our colored brethren. During the war of our Revolution, it is said that at a particular important point of his lines, Washington found his sentinels, night after night, picked off by a party that could not be detected. At length he committed the care of that point to a sagacious, trusty negro, on service in the army; a negro citizen (let Secretary Cass mark it) was particularly trusted by Washington. He told him the nature of the danger, and bade him have all his wits about him, remembering the watchword, if any suspicious movement was before him, which was to call out, Who goes there? three times, and then fire. The faithful, keen-witted negro reflected, and made up his mind. Past midnight, his watchful ear caught the stealthy advance of the enemy, and just waiting long enough to be sure of his aim, he levelled his gun, and called out, in one sentence, at one breath, Who goes dere tree time? and then fired. The foe was shot and discovered, the alarm given, and the post saved. Sometimes we must thus concentrate, and give the warning and the shot at the same moment; not here a little and there a little, but all at once, and blow after blow followed up so rapidly that neither compromise nor retreat shall be possible.

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VINET has said: "Even now, after eighteen centuries of Christianity, we may be involved in some enormous error, of which the Christianity of the future will make us ashamed."

The doctrine of the book is commonly ascribed to Abp. WHATELY (Scripture Revelations of a Future State, c. 8). It is urged by Sir JAMES STEPHEN, as the only way of meeting the growing scepticism of the age (Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, Epilogue), and is commanding general respect in England. The gentleman above referred to says opinion on this subject "is undergoing a great but steady change in the best quarters."

In Germany it has been maintained by Prof. C. H. WEISSE (Christian Eschatology, Studien u. Kritiken, 1836), and is very ably stated by Dr. ROTHE (Theological Ethics, § 490). Of him and his work see Schaff's "Germany," c. 33.

In our own country it is not only maintained by various ministers who have lost an orthodox connexion by withdrawal or disfellowship, but it is known to be held by several pastors of orthodox churches, who expect duly to publish the fact, wisely guarding their flocks against the dangers of schism—not specially by proselyting, but by discovering to them what are the fundamental and "necessary things" of the Christian Faith.

Is the doctrine of immortal woe one of these?

The main points made in the argument are as follows:

1. The eternal sinfulness of wicked beings would involve perplexing relations to the Divine Government, and give a kind of dignity to the wicked themselves. And eternal wickedness, though in punishment, and however overruled for good, would be an eternal evil. This must be either God's choice, or his necessity; and either view brings insuperable difficulties into our theology. But *temporary* evil may be neither God's choice nor his necessity, being simply permitted, in a system of probation or of recovery. The distinction between evil temporary and evil eternal appears important from such facts as these: A learned writer closes an account of the dispute between Bayle and his opponents by saying, "No one can deny that the very great difficulties which press the doctrine of the origin of evil and its reconciliation with the justice and goodness of God, could be more easily overcome if an end of hell-punishments is supposed, and not their eternity." And Dr. Müller concludes his work on "The Christian Doctrine of Sin" thus: "A solution of the problem of the world would be possible, if *the* evil were not; — the evil which . . . is capable of being maintained, by the will of the personal creature, persistently hardening itself, through endless ages."

2. The scriptural doctrine of a Future Life is, endless life for the righteous. "The doctrine of the 'immortality of the soul' and the name are alike unknown to the entire Bible." (Olshausen, on 1 Cor. xv. 19, 20.) This supposed fundamental truth is treated with profound silence in the Scriptures, while the Divine Existence, with which it is often compared, is named continually. The phrase "everlasting punishment," put in contrast with "eternal life," does not imply immortal life in suffering. This is shown from the terms used, from Jewish opinions, and from the concession of orthodox divines that eternal extinction would be eternal punishment. The phrase "their worm dieth not, etc.," (Isa. lxvi. 24; Mark ix. 44,) as much proves the immortality of carcasses as of souls. The phrase "unquenchable fire" was used by Eusebius in speaking of the martyrdom of Christians. These and other like expressions properly denote a complete and utter destruction of that to which they are applied.

3. The phrase "immortal soul" is not found in a Christian document until A. D. 135; nor such phrases as "eternal misery" until a later period. Such expressions resulted from the combination of Christian doctrine with Platonic opinions. This combination is apparent in the earlier writings of Justin Martyr, A. D. 140; but his later writings warrant the statement of Gieseler, that he "appeared to regard it as possible that the souls of the ungodly will at some time be wholly annihilated." Irenæus, (A. D. 178,) opposing the Rationalism of his day, speaks very plainly of "continuance for ever and ever to those who are saved;" and of others as "depriving themselves of the gift of duration to all eternity." It would be easier to show that even Athanasius, the "Father of Orthodoxy," held this, than that he held the now orthodox view. The results of the above named combination were, Manichæan difficulty on the one hand, and Restorationism on the other. The latter, unknown before, soon prevailed extensively, produced the doctrine of Purgatory, and continues to this day.

4. The practical tendency of the view here offered is suggested by the last statement. A punishment too fearful — is unfeared. This is illustrated in the history of the English criminal code, ere its reform by the efforts of Romilly and his coädjutors. And the history of the Church goes to show that the new — rather, old and forgotten — doctrine of Life in Christ only, would give the Gospel new energy and power.

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THE RIGHTS OF WRONG;

OR,

IS EVIL ETERNAL?

In a recent conversation on the subject of future punishment, we heard something like the following dialogue: —

A. Can justice require the endless suffering of the lost?

B. But an end of their sufferings is just what the wicked would desire; and God is not bound to gratify them, as he would by annihilating them.

A. What would *gratify* them proves nothing either way. The question is, What do they *deserve?* They have at least one valid claim, — a claim to justice.

B. They have no rights whatever.

A. What! not even to strict justice?

B. They are wholly undeserving; they have forfeited all rights.

A. Then they have no right to punishment!

We think the last inference was fair, at least as showing that B.'s particular theory of "infinite justice" was suicidal. He could no longer claim that the lost should exist forever in order that they may suffer for ever; for by his own showing they have no right to existence.

But we may not condemn the prevalent doctrine of eternal punishment for the weak arguments of B., or of any other man. We will therefore state the common view, and reason upon it independently.

The wicked are supposed to suffer for ever. That eternal woe is either something which they may claim in their own right, or, if they "have no rights," it is demanded by some dread nature

of things. Either God has no *power* to destroy the wicked; or his *wisdom* forbids it, lest worse evils should follow in the wake of their annihilation; or he has no *right* to let them perish.

I. His *power* to destroy them is sometimes denied, as in a late assertion that "annihilation is impossible;" though the expression was perhaps not designed to be strictly taken. It is also sometimes said that the soul is divine, and a part of God; but this statement will not be pressed, as it would evidently prove too much. The common argument from the soul's immaterial and uncompounded nature would also prove the immortality of the brutes, as seems to be admitted by Bishop Butler, and is remarked by considerate writers. Hence it is better to say with Jeremy Taylor: "Whatsoever had a beginning may also have an ending; and it shall die, unless it be daily watered from the streams flowing from the fountain of life, and refreshed with the dew of heaven, and the wells of God. . . . Immortality was not in Adam's nature, but in the hands and parts, in the favor and superadditions of God." At least we should not, as many do, infer the immortality of the lost from the words of Christ in Matt. x. 28.

II. If it would be *unwise* for God to destroy the wicked, it must be for some such reason as this, — that their eternal sufferings are needed, either as an example, to restrain other beings from sin and death; or as a means of impressing the glorified saints with the greatness of their salvation, and thus of increasing their blessedness; or as an instructive display of the holiness of God in his "infinite justice."

But the first of these suppositions implies that God could never, to all eternity, raise up and discipline in holiness the beings who should ever love and enjoy him, without a coeternal woe in myriads of the lost. The second implies great and eternal imperfection in those who are saved; viz., that they do not love God and goodness heartily enough for their own sakes or for their proper bliss; perhaps not enough to save them from plunging into annihilation if they might die. The third implies that God's "infinite justice" binds him to the eternal existence of those who rebel against him. And this is the third case first supposed.

III. If God has no *right* to destroy the wicked, then, whatever rights they may have or may not have, *wickedness* has claims obviously implied, and which we propose seriously to consider.

We shall not stop long to show that an eternal suffering of the lost would imply an eternity of wickedness and of evil. Even if the lost should not actually sin for ever, — adding ceaselessly to the number of their transgressions, — still they are supposed to remain for ever guilty and wicked. If they never change for the worse, neither do they change for the better. In their immortality wickedness appears as for ever actual. And if wickedness is an evil in itself, the eternal wickedness is an eternal evil.

Nor will it be any less really an evil because forever punished, or eternally overruled for good. The punishment would be — or would be thought — an expression of God's hatred of the evil; and the good supposed to accrue would be strictly by an *overruling* of the wickedness, and not its legitimate fruit. Like begets like, and evil naturally produces only evil.

Hence it appears to us that the immortal misery of the lost, making evil coeternal with God, implies very important rights and claims on the side of evil. If these rights do not inhere in the persons of the lost, they are the rights of wickedness itself. If the former have forfeited all claims whatsoever, the latter retains an inalienable right — if not to liberty and happiness, at least to life in bondage, and the pursuit of misery.

How such an eternal opposition to the justice and holiness of God should be consistent with his justice and even required by it, many theories have been advanced. We shall not examine those theories here. We only remark that the justice of God should never be called "infinite" with respect to any single or finite fact; for the very idea of justice implies a limit. Justice is exactness in moral relations. It regards that which is right and equal. If divine justice is "infinite," it is such simply for the infinite range and the endless round of its applications, and in no other way.

And to the common objection — the *argumentum ad invidiam* — that an end of suffering would please the lost (which proves

nothing either way), we may further reply that an end of wickedness and woe is just the thing which would *not* please Satan. Nothing could be more to his wish than that sin which God abhors, and pain which he pities, should run parallel with the eternity in which he dwells. And though Satan should suffer *with* the lost, he would be no less pleased with the company of their misery. *Is God bound to gratify him?* And this question is equally pertinent whether we regard Satan as a single person, or as the "aggregate of evil spirits," or as a personification only of the power of evil. The rights of wickedness would be the same in either case.

Now we assert, against all theories of immortal woe, that WICKEDNESS HAS NO RIGHTS. It has none because it is essentially and eternally *wrong*. It is just the thing in all the universe which ought not to be. It has, therefore, at the outset, no right to exist. And of course, where it starts into existence, it has no shadow of right but to come to an end; if not by reformation, then by execution and extirpation. It can come into being only by fraudulent or violent intrusion. It is an outlaw that knows no rule, and has no proper place in all the world. It has no right of possession anywhere. Its only possible pretence of right is at best a "squatter's claim." It can assert no such right by any title that is known or customary in the world. It has never created, nor inherited, nor received by grant or purchase, nor obtained by first discovery, nor gained by occupancy undisturbed, nor has it earned by honest labor, nor won in manly trial of strength or skill, a single cubic inch of space for a home in all the universe of God. Nor is there any supreme Law of Nations that should give it a right of conquest in any realm of the King of kings. It begins only as rebellion, and has only a rebel's right either of citizenship or of residence. It lives only as revolt from God; and "what world shall receive any of those who run away from him?" *

Nor is its right of sufferance any better than its right of possession. Because it is only evil and wrong, it has no "city of

* Clement of Rome, Epistle to the Corinthians, c. 28.

refuge" anywhere. There is no sacred altar to which it can cling, no inviolate temple to which it may flee for safety. It has no right of sanctuary or asylum or retreat, to save its life, in all the dominions of God. Neither in heaven, nor on earth, nor under the earth, can it find just or permitted hospitality or protection. Though it gain admittance in the thoughts and hearts of men, — nay, a second and a seven-fold admittance in a house empty, swept, and garnished, — it has gained no right even there. And if it would seek a resting-place in the supposed "world of woe," even at the gates of Pandemonium it must become a suppliant to the divine mercy for admission. It does not change its hateful nature by crossing the threshold of the "abodes of eternal despair;" for grim despair must drive it even thence. Because its nature is wickedness, He who forbids and abhors it wholly, abhors and forbids it there.

Nor has it the right of a fugitive and vagabond life, to roam homeless for ever, seeking rest and finding none; that would be a right of *existence* which it has not. Its only right is "beyond the bounds of time and space" in the strict sense of the phrase; a doom which in fact is commonly assigned to it by the theology of men's hearts and sentiments, more true than that of the schools and systems. For when divines are asked where is the eternal abode of Satan and the lost, they commonly do not know where, which is practically not far from nowhere.

And here again is the theology of men's feelings truer than their reasonings. The thought of eternal evil is as painful to good men as the fact must be hateful to God. Hence good men think little about it; it enters little or not at all into their schemes of future blessedness. They give it no place in their expected hallelujah. It is out of their thoughts, and thus practically out of the world — the same as if it were not. They simply regard the wicked as finally lost and gone, as we think the Scriptures also regard them.

Such was the true scope and import of the *anathema* that lies on the pages of the Bible. It was a devotement to death. Of the Hebrew *chereth* or *excision* there were various degrees, of which the last and uttermost could only be fatal to the being

of him that suffered it. Such an one was "an abomination, to be detested and removed from the sight of God and men." From the sight of men, for evil is painful to the moral sense; all good angels and all good men and other creatures in all the realms of God, do join with one harmonious voice in that prayer of David: "Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end!" And it can vanish from the sight of God only by dying out from the fair universe of which he is the Creator and Sovereign Lord.

But here it is objected that sin and wickedness — hateful and abominable though they be — do actually exist; and hence our argument proves too much; for, if valid, it would as much prove that evil can not exist at all, as that it will not be eternal; for evil is intrinsically as wrong and detestable for a moment as it would be existing for ever. And so the argument proves nothing.*

The objection seems to us only plausible. We think the common sense and instinct of mankind finds a real difference between evil temporary, and evil eternal; between evil doomed, and evil spared; between evil under sentence of death, and evil in immortal life; between evil transient, and evil abiding for ever; between evil unsettled, fugitive, fleeting, and evil fixed, enduring, permanent; between evil frail and vanishing, and evil indestructible, irreducible; between evil casual — incidental to the trial of new-created beings, and evil constant — ever inseparable from a perfected and matured system. To deny the difference between these seems to us like arguing that the unsightly poles and scaffolding used in erecting a building may never be removed, because if they are endurable a week they are endurable forever; or that they who languish with disease should remain immortally sick if they do not get well. And all the differing features of

*Dr. T. M. Post, New Englander, Feb. 1856, p. 148; — Dr, J. Strong, Methodist Quarterly, July, 1858, p. 417; — Prof. E. P. Barrows, Bibliotheca Sacra, July, 1858, p. 629; — Prof. A. Hovey, The Impenitent Dead, pp. 145, 146. Dr. Whately states the same difficulty in his "Scripture Revelations of a Future State," c. 8. But here, as throughout the book, — which is a series of checks to dogmatism, — the design of his argument is negative and not positive. It is commonly inferred from the whole chapter that he holds immortality of the good alone.

temporary and eternal evil betoken to us a difference not in their amount only, but in their relations, and power, and kind.

But if common sense should not at once discover this difference, crying out that nuisances must be seasonably abated, and restrained wrath yet cease from all God's fair domain, some things further may be said. An ancient wit tells us of a scholastic, who, having a house he wished to sell, carried about a brick as a sample and advertisement of it. Now he doubtless selected such a brick as would speak well for the house, — one that would appear and endure well. But our divines seem not so wise as that. If the scheme of God's eternity is to be represented by some specimen Moment of duration, the fairest one of all would fain be chosen. Instead of that we are offered the first that comes, — the nearest at hand, — the poor and transient Now. The model Instant is taken out from the history of a fallen, rebel world, with rebellious angels for wicked and wretched company. The world of men quite young, and that of the fallen spirits not very old. And there is something too, in the history, about a song of the morning stars, and sons of God shouting for joy, and all things being made very good, — as if there might have been no evil once. Yet from the present evil age the minute is selected to mirror forth the eternal future; here, and in this part of the universe, the brick is chosen that shall represent the plan of the eternal realm. A very poor brick; taken from the feet of a certain image, — iron mixed with potter's clay; — misshapen, bearing the footprints of a wild beast that has slunk in to mar and destroy; such a brick as common builders will not use, nor have, but throw away. Such are the pattern moments shown us in this world half recovered from a sad ruin; and we are told that the Great Architect may have such, and use them, and show them, in his grand and glorious Cosmos, for ever!

But this is not all. The objection that our argument against the eternity of evil proves too much may be retorted. If the argument from a specimen Moment avails to show that evil for ever *will* exist, it equally proves that sin for ever *has* existed. For, a moment in the past eternity is intrinsically no different from a moment in the future eternity; and if the moment Now is

a sample of all the other moments in the world, it follows that evil has existed eternally. The instant in which it did not exist can not be claimed by our divines. Their logic can not save from its contamination a fleeting second of the unbeginning past. It not only will live as long as God does, but it is already as old as he is. Hence it never began to exist, but is self-existent, uncreated, unoriginated, divine. Here we have a plain doctrine of two coeternal principles, and may as well at once confess ourselves Manichæans in full bloom, — if this method of gauging Eternity by its bits and fragments is sound reasoning.

But if we grant that what has begun to be may cease from being, then, ere we stamp aught with the signet of eternity, we must look beyond the bare fact of its existence to the nature and reasons of it; we must discover in it the qualities that fit it for endless duration. We do not know that sin or evil has one such quality. Nay, it is a very common saying among philosophers, ancient and modern, that evil is privation and negation, akin to nothingness, and the like. Thus the Father of Orthodoxy: "Evil things are not entities; but good things are entities, since they are of God who truly is." If, then, God chooses that evil should exist for ever, or if he lacks the power or the right to bring it to an end, or to let it die, the proof of its sad eternity must be a plain declaration from God himself that such is his free choice or his dire necessity. The doctrine finds the slenderest support in human reason. Let us see if the Revelation unveils and declares it.

We can not in this brief tract give even an outline of the scriptural proof that wicked beings are not immortal. But a few striking features of the argument may suffice to call attention to the subject.

The most obvious fact, in a cursory reading of the Scriptures, is the entire absence of all mention of the immortality of the soul as such, of mankind as a race, or of the wicked as a class. "The doctrine of 'the immortality of the soul' and the name are alike unknown to the entire Bible." (Olshausen, Comm. on 1 Cor. xv. 19, 20.) And because the doctrine is not mentioned or spoken

of, those who hold the prevalent view must suppose one of three things: either that the immortality in question is *assumed* or taken for granted as too clear to need express mention, or that it is *implied* and easily made out from the revealed rewards and punishments, or that the eternal existence of the lost is *unworthy of the name* of immortality.

I. Is the immortality in question *assumed?* In support of this view it is often urged as a parallel case that the *divine existence* is assumed without being expressly asserted. Very true; but there is this difference in the cases: the existence of God, while assumed as too clear for doubt, is named, spoken of, alluded to, and otherwise *explicitly* assumed, in many hundreds of scriptural expressions. But the immortality in question, if assumed, is never at all alluded to, but is treated with utter and profound silence. This difference can not be explained by supposing the immortality of man so much clearer than the divine existence; for the former has been far more doubted by mankind than the latter. Nor is the difference due to the higher importance of the doctrine of God's existence; for though the being of a God is of more account *to the universe* than the immortality of man, yet *to man himself* it is *not* more important. And the Bible is given not to the universe at large, but as a special revelation to mankind, to instruct them in their duties and their destinies; — given to bring life and immortality to light.

II. The immortality of the lost is not *implied* in the Scriptures. The Hebrew phrase, "living soul" (Gen. ii. 7), is applied also to the brutes (Gen. i. 30). The creation in the divine image may include the notion of man as designed *for* immortality, but then the immortality is lost with the divine likeness, and regained only with it (Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10). And the Scriptures in their general tenor expressly promise to the righteous "life," "eternal" or "everlasting life," "life for evermore," "length of days for ever and ever," "immortality," "incorruption," and that they shall "live," "live for ever," and be "incorruptible." On the other hand the destiny of the lost is called "death," "second death," "destruction," "everlasting de-

struction," "perdition," "corruption;" and they are said to "die," "surely die," to be "destroyed," "destroyed for ever," to "perish," "utterly perish," to be "consumed," "burned, "devoured," "cut off," to be "as nothing," and "put away as dross." These expressions are employed in about five hundred and fifty instances in the Bible, with apparent reference to the final destinies of men as good or bad. Some of the examples in the Old Testament may indeed be claimed as referring to temporal deliverances and destructions; but even these may be fairly taken as containing a *principle*, or as stating in a general way the proper retribution of the classes named. To the Hebrews such a general application of them would be most natural. And in this way almost every doubtful passage has been taken as a text for a discourse on the final judgment of mankind.

Now it is a rule admitted by all interpreters that, *primâ facie*, the true sense of an expression is the literal sense; *i.e.*, the common, ordinary, usual, obvious sense, which first strikes the mind of the reader. This sense may of course be overruled; for the whole meaning of the Bible does not lie on its surface; the book contains more than meets the eye in a casual reading. Still the rule holds good, that the common sense of words is overruled only by special considerations, which appear in the context or in the general structure of the book.

But the doctrine of the immortality of the lost gives to all these five hundred expressions a metaphorical sense. The ordinary and indigenous sense is thrust out, to make room for an extraordinary and exotic sense; and "life" and "death," and all their kindred words, are taken to mean, not conscious existence and its opposite, but happiness and misery. And our Christian literature and modes of thought are so accustomed to this metaphor, that we are sometimes told it is *of course* the true interpretation, and can hardly admit of an opposing argument.

But this "of course" flies in the face of the universal rule giving the literal sense a first choice. And what reason is offered for the metaphorical sense, in so many hundred phrases, comprising the general tenor of the Revelation itself, and involving the question of immortal woe and eternal evil? What

reason for an "of course" so infinitely dreadful? If in one single instance the soul or mankind or the lost were called immortal, then so much of logical and fair reason for the procedure would be apparent. But no such reason is given. By a single writer, who betrays the force of the difficulty, a solitary passage is offered as asserting of all mankind that they "can not die any more" (Luke xx. 36); but his interpretation finds few if any supporters.

Yet other reasons are more commonly offered. There are about twenty passages in which the punishment of the lost, under various names, is called eternal. But here the slightest attention will discover a remarkable fact: that, with a single apparent exception, the punishment of the lost is never called eternal misery. When it is called suffering, it is not said to be eternal; and when it is called eternal, it is not said to be suffering. These two fearful words, which have had continual wedlock in our modern religious dialect, — as if such rights of wrong had been established from of old, — are carefully and sedulously divorced in the language of the Scriptures. The apparent exception is a single instance, and this claims brief attention.

The passage is found in Rev. xx. 10: "The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." This is the first passage appealed to by a late writer, beginning his direct scriptural argument for the common view.* Other passages are often adduced to show that the death threatened to Adam was not literal; but this is the first and only one that can be even offered as portraying immortal woe.

Here several facts are obvious to remark: —

1. The picture is placed at the *end* of the revelation of the just judgment of God, whereas, if it be a ruling text, it would seem most in place at the *beginning* of the sacred volume. This supposed unveiling of undying woe is found not in the first year of man's history, but in the Year of the World 4068; about 140

* Dr. A. Hovey, "The Impenitent Dead." § IV., p. 78.

generations after the first man was put on trial for immortality, with the express condition that if he ate of a certain forbidden fruit he should surely die. If *then*, when, in the childhood of the race, the plainest instruction was needed, — "line upon line and precept upon precept," — if *then* it had been said, "If thou eatest thou shalt surely *not* die — thou shalt be tormented day and night for ever and ever," from such an adamantine bolt, driven with a divine and omnipotent emphasis, the received chain of argument might be safely suspended. The reverberating thunders of such a sentence might have secured an "orthodox" interpretation of every subsequent allusion to man's destiny. We might then have been sure, when we read of "death" and of "destruction," and of "perishing," and so on, that these expressions were not to be taken in their common sense, but as intimating "torment day and night for ever and ever." But such plain warning of a twice infinite danger — deathless pain added to the loss of endless joy — was deferred for more than four millenniums, and given at length, not in the hearing of all human ears, but to one in visions on the isle of Patmos.

The highest crime which history records against Caligula is that he pretended to publish his laws by posting them on pillars so high that none could read them, and then punished his subjects for not obeying them. No man believes that the faithful and just God has done any such thing; but, as we would shun the very appearance of evil, we should have some care lest our interpretations of his word suggest a procedure which would be infinitely worse.

2. The only plain and unequivocal announcement of endless woe should be found in a book of unquestionably canonical character. The adamantine bolt should be planted in a rock that can be riven or shaken by no honest criticism. But the Apocalypse is the very book whose place in the canon has been most disputed, and that by orthodox divines. It was rejected by the early Syrian Church. Its canonicity was denied by Dionysius of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem, and other Fathers, and was generally doubted in the Greek Church. It was decidedly questioned by Erasmus, Luther, Carlstadt, and Zwingli, and, lately,

by Bleek, Lücke, De Wette, Neander, and others. These opposing suffrages do not and can not destroy the book — as it can not be either destroyed or established by mere authority. We find the proofs of its inspiration in its marked contrast with other Apocalyptic books of the time; in the chastened glory of its imagery, and in the comfort and support to faith it has yielded in times of persecution and fiery trial. Yet the interpretation of it requires caution and modesty, lest the remark of Calvin, who professed not to understand it, should get some shadow of truth: "It either finds a man mad, or it makes him such." Such a censure of these who overworked the book in one direction may check the confidence of these who press it with rigor in another direction; who find in its "second death," its blotting from the "book of life," and its barring from the "tree of life," no bar against immortal woe; who, having abandoned the literal and *primâ facie* true sense in more than five hundred instances, at one late passage insist that such a sense is to be taken without question lest we be found tampering with God's word.

But if the literal sense is to be overruled in any case, there is, *à priori*, as good reason for doing this once, and against the claims of eternal evil, as for doing it five hundred times, in favor of those claims. We think it is not rationalistic, but rational, to say as much as this. And in this view the words of Paul in Rom. ix. 20, sometimes cited in this argument, might be retorted, with an emphasis. Our hermeneutics should not readily decide the claims of a final and universal holiness and blessedness — "against God."

3. On the meaning of the passage in question we should add that the same strictness which would prove the endless misery of "Satan, the Beast, and the False Prophet," would prove from the context the literal destruction of another host. "Fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them." But the highly dramatic character of the book forbids exegetical rigor. In a dramatic view there is some reason — supported by other passages of Scripture — for supposing that the "torment" is not literal but figurative, describing the utter and total extinction of the powers named. Aside from this, the "lake of fire and brimstone" is by some taken as a symbol of earthly calamities, to

which these powers shall be subject "*day and night* for ever and ever." Better than this would be the view that takes the last phrase — "for ever and ever" — in the sense of "during the existence of the thing," — the Latin *perpetuò*; — a sense in which it doubtless occurs in the Scriptures.

We have spoken of other arguments to show that the terms "life" and "death" are used in a metaphorical sense in the Scriptures. The passages most frequently adduced are Matt. viii. 22; Eph. ii. 1, 5, and Col. ii. 13 ("Dead in trespasses and sins"); 1 Tim. v. 6. To these may be added Rom. vi. 11; viii. 10; Heb. vi. 1; ix. 14; James ii. 17, 20, 26; Rev. iii. 1. If a moral or spiritual death is intended in these passages, then, it is claimed, the sentence in Gen. ii. 17, may not imply the death of the soul. The argument is of course negative. It can not directly or positively show the immortality of the lost; for it would be absurd to deduce immortal life out from the dregs of spiritual death; though we find one instance in which this is done, by Augustine (In Joh. Evangel. Tractt., c. xlvii. § 8).

To this negative argument there are three replies: 1. We are inclined to deny that "spiritual death" is the proper or primary import of these passages. There is another interpretation; viz., that "dead in trespasses and sins" signifies, subject to death by reason of trespasses and sins. The reference is to a future death, incurred by sin; and this may be death of body, or soul, or both. The figure is that of *prolepsis*, or the anticipation of the future as already present. This figure is undoubtedly of frequent occurrence in the Scriptures, and we have found it applied in various early versions and by various commentators, to the sentence in Gen. ii. 17. And the same exegesis is given by many others, in the most important of the other passages.*

* In Gen. ii. 17, the proleptic sense is given by the Targum of Jonathan, the Greek of Symmachus, the Syriac and the Arabic; by Jerome, Isidore of Pelusium, Nachmanides, Vatablus ("subject to death, both of soul and body;" and Fagius adds: "The Hebrews deny not this twofold death"); Grotius, Knapp, J. Mueller, and others. The same sense is given in one or more of the other passages by Augustine, Theodoret, Erasmus, Calvin, Beza, Turretin, Gomar, Grotius, Vitringa, Bengel, Bretschneider, Wahl, Rueckert, Fritzsche, Kæuffer, Tholuck, Hammond, Whitby, Macknight, Clarke, and others. In a few instances (Heb. vi. 1; ix. 14; James ii. 17, 20, 26) this sense is precluded because *things* are spoken of and not *persons*.

2. Granting the sense of "spiritual death" in the other passages, it would still remain to be shown that the term death *always* has that sense; or that it has that sense in all the passages relating to man's final destiny; or that it never indicates or implies a literal death of the soul.

3. Granting the metaphorical sense, we may yet claim that instead of being sundered from the literal sense, it still hovers round it as being derived from it. We have an illustration familiar to all. It is often said of the drunkard that he has "destroyed" himself. Do we infer that because he can not be more than destroyed, and is not dead yet, therefore he will live for ever and never sink to a drunkard's grave? Just the opposite. And the reason is that the term "destroy," though used in a slightly metaphorical or proleptic sense, still anchors in the original and literal sense. The drunkard will die *because* he has destroyed himself. So "spiritual death" may very aptly — as the penumbra of a total eclipse — foreshadow and atmosphere an eternal death that leaves no trace of life nor gleam of hope.

The other phrases supposed to imply the immortality of the lost, such as "their worm dieth not," etc., "unquenchable fire," "everlasting punishment," can not here be considered. We need only remark that the latter phrase is put in contrast with "life eternal," and for that reason the implication of immortal life is unnatural. And orthodox writers concede that extinction would be eternal punishment. The common argument from the other phrases would prove far too much, as the immortality of carcasses (Isa. lxvi. 24), of tares, chaff, and felled trees, and even the eternal woe of Christian martyrs, who, as Eusebius says, were burned at the stake in "an unquenchable fire."

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, if taken literally, describes only the intermediate state, and proves nothing beyond the judgment. "'Abraham's bosom' is not heaven, though it will issue in heaven; so neither 'Hades' is hell, though it will issue in it, when death and Hades shall be cast into the lake of fire, which is the proper hell" [and the second death. Rev. xx. 14; cf. Matt. x. 28]. (Trench, On the Parables.)

III. We named one other argument of those who hold the common view; viz., that the eternal existence of the lost is *unworthy of the name* of immortality, and therefore they are not called immortal. Very true; but this reasoning may go further than it was intended. The Bible is peculiarly apt to call things by their right names. Now "eternal conscious existence" is the right name for eternal conscious existence. But the Scriptures never assert even that of the wicked; and those who use the phrase, as some carefully do, are inconsistent by their own showing; they travel out of the record, and are "wise above that which is written." If these good people — and Christians generally — would adhere more closely to the words which are "profitable for correction," this sad controversy about immortal woe and eternal evil would soon come to an end.

It hardly needs to be said that, while we deny the eternity of evil, we affirm its actual temporary existence, and its guilt on the part of man. We are not deists or pantheists, that we should exculpate man by calling his sin only relative and apparent. We affirm also that there is a true and valid doctrine of the "wrath of God;" — a displeasure against every evil work, which will destroy along with sin all those who love and cherish it. And over against this only right of guilt we find a proper Gospel of grace: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life."

We may suggest, in conclusion, that the doctrine of undying evil has a practical bearing. If God, the Lord of the Universe, can not avoid an eternal continuance of evil, then poor, weak man, in his petty relations to the world, may think it no sin to allow some things not the best. "Necessity knows no law;" and the higher necessity may lend its sanction to the lower. Individuals and communities may tolerate peccadilloes and social mischiefs because worse things shall ever be; which would be thrust away by a prevalent feeling that EVIL HAS NO RIGHTS, and will in due time be swept away from the whole realm of God.

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